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HC 811

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Suits for the School Boy

A broadcast by Miss Margaret Smith, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Tuesday, September 2, 1941, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, over stations associated with the NBC Blue Network.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

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WALLACE KADDERLY:

This is the Tuesday after Labor Day. Summer vacation is just about over for about 30 million boys and girls who shortly will be returning to school. In some parts of the country they're already at their desks. So it's timely information that Margaret Smith of the Bureau of Home Economics has for mothers today -- information about school clothes -- school clothes for the school boy. And Miss Smith -- I might add -- should know whereof she speaks. For over home economics way she's officially known as a "clothing specialist."

MARGARET SMITH:

I think it might be a little more accurate, Mr. Kadderly -- to just call me a reporter today. For whatever I have to say about boy's suits -- I'll simply be telling what Clarice Scott over at our Bureau has found out.

KADDERLY:

Oh -- yes -- she's the one, I remember, who worked out those buying guides for women's dresses we mentioned on this program -- let's see -- must have been about a year ago. And hasn't she done another one on women's coats?

SMITH:

She has -- and now here's her very latest -- a new bulletin on "Buying Boys Suits." Just to bring you up-to-date on your buying guides -- here's a copy for you, Mr. Kadderly -- if you'd like it.

KADDERLY:

Thanks. -- Say that's a lively looking group of youngsters you have on the cover. Let's see -- one -- two -- three -- twelve real American boys -- just enough for a football team with one on the bench.

SMITH:

Or a game of work-up baseball -- with three batters and nine in the field.

KADDERLY:

Anyway -- what ever game they play -- you can be mighty sure that their clothes are going to have to be able to take a lot. Boys like that are none too easy on clothes.

SMITH:

No -- and you wouldn't expect them to be. I have an idea that baseball and football wouldn't be an ounce of fun if boys had to think about their clothes all the time. Miss Scott kept realistic facts like that in mind as she was writing this buying guide for boys' suits.

KADDERLY:

As I remember Miss Scott's other buying guides -- I expect the information in this one is as up-to-date as this good-looking cover.

(over)

SMITH:

It certainly is -- you may have my word on that. For I saw the way Miss Scott studied the boys' suit situation. She visited all kinds of stores -- and she talked with manufacturers. And finally, she examined hundreds of suits -- from the inside out -- and from collar to cuff.

KADDERLY:

And then she worked out the points that made the difference between a good suit and one that'll look shoddy in just a little while?

SMITH:

Not only that -- but she worked out ways to help parents judge these differences when they go to buy their boy a new suit. And then she took pictures to illustrate some of the points that you can't show in writing. I think mothers will find the illustrations in this new bulletin especially valuable.

KADDERLY:

Miss Smith, I've been leafing through this bulletin as we've been talking -- and right here in the middle -- I see the whole story of how to buy a suit -- all worked out in a handy chart.

SMITH:

Yes, that's a checklist -- and really a summary of the high points of the rest of the bulletin. We put it in the middle so Mothers could open up to it quickly -- if they wanted to refresh their memories before they started out for town. The details of that summary are explained in the rest of the bulletin.

KADDERLY:

Seems to me there are a whale of a lot of things to check on here. I could use some of these tips when I buy myself a suit.

SMITH:

Some of these points would apply all right. But of course buying a suit for a boy isn't exactly the same proposition as buying a man's suit.

For one thing -- boys are more active than men -- and they are growing so fast that a suit can't possibly last them as long as a suit lasts a man. Therefore a lot of the fine points of tailoring -- and very best quality material that would be worth their price on a man's suit -- would be pure extravagance in a suit for a boy. He outgrows it too fast.

KADDERLY:

Speaking of the growing boy -- Miss Smith -- has anything ever been done to solve the problem of the youngster that grows so fast his clothes can't keep up with him -- even in the same season?

SMITH:

Yes -- there has -- and I don't mean buying a suit that's too big for the boy in the first place. That's uncomfortable for the boy -- and he doesn't feel his best in an ill-fitting suit. More than that -- it's unnecessary because today there are plenty of well-made sport suits on the market with room for growth built right into them.

KADDERLY:

You mean the suit can grow right along with the boy?

SMITH:

Something like that. They have outlet seams and hems in the coats and trousers. And some of them have special features -- such as a bi-swing back for instance

KADDERLY:

A bi-swing back. Sounds more like a football player than a part of a suit.

SMITH:

Pardon me Mr. Kadderly -- for lapsing into textile lingo. A bi-swing back is nothing more than a pleated back on a coat -- that allows plenty of room for action across the shoulders -- and for growth. But that's only one way the suits can "grow." Some of them have elastic waistbands on the trousers -- and pleated trouser fronts. Suits with these features may cost a little more -- but they're worth considering if you're buying a suit for a boy who's shooting up like a weed.

KADDERLY:

All those features you've mentioned Miss Smith sound as though they'd make for comfort -- too. And comfort is a factor if the boy inside the suit is going to get his readin' and writin' and 'rithmetic the way he should.

SMITH:

And don't forget recess -- Mr. Kadderly. That's the school R that's the hardest on clothes. And that's the time when you really see a suit get the acid test.

KADDERLY:

Guess you're right, there.

SMITH:

If it can stand up under the rough and tumble action of a game of football -- you know it's going to last through arithmetic class.

And by the way -- the way a suit is made has a lot to do with how well it will last.

KADDERLY:

And Miss Scott's new buying guide tells how to judge the way a suit is made.

SMITH:

It does. If you'll look at that chart in the middle of the bulletin again -- you'll see all the important points to check on that score too -- the way a suit has been cut for instance -- and the stitching -- and the reinforcements on the pockets -- and around the armholes. It's all there -- and Miss Scott has worked out practical easy ways to judge every one of those points.

KADDERLY:

Just one more question Miss Smith. Has Miss Scott set forth in this bulletin any method for catching the boy? -- I mean a way to get him to go along cheerfully when you get ready to buy him a suit.

SMITH:

No -- I'm sorry -- there isn't. That's something every mother has to sort of work out for herself. But this bulletin does set forth a lot of other things a mother doesn't have to work out for herself -- information and suggestions that will make buying a boy's suit a lot easier in every other way.

KADDERLY:

Good enough. Well, Farm and Home Friends, those of you who are interested in this new buying guide on boys' suits -- just drop a card to the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Ask for "Buying Boys' Suits," or the "boys' suit bulletin." The girls in the mailing room will get it straight.

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